

Members of the House Republican transition team will hold a conference call Tuesday to sift through dozens of rules, schedules and other proposals offered by Members last week. But don't expect decisions anytime soon.

Team members said last week that they expect to have any proposed changes to House Republican Conference rules ready for Members to vote on during the week of Dec. 6. Republicans said the rule package for the full House will not be completed until mid- to late December.

The 22-member transition team, led by Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), began the process of soliciting ideas, taking questions and hearing concerns in three different working groups last week. Of the topics discussed by the three groups, which met Thursday and Friday, the House schedule and House rules have been the most popular and most controversial.

Rep. Jim Jordan said he thinks the transition team's process of gathering and vetting ideas has been "well-received."

Committee jurisdiction has been the hot topic in the House and Conference Rules Working Group, the Ohio Republican said, adding that Members have been responding well to the dialogue. Jordan did not comment on specific committee disputes, but a turf battle created by Rep. Doc Hastings' proposal that the Energy and Commerce Committee relinquish energy issues to the Natural Resources Committee has caused unrest. The Washington Republican is expected to be Natural Resources chairman in the 112th Congress.

Jordan also said the Republican leadership's commitment to keeping the rules process open has been an important part of the transition team's discussions. House Republicans spent much of their tenure in the minority blasting the Democratic majority for barring their ability to offer amendments to major legislation on the House floor.

"Members know that there are going to be Democrats who are offering amendments that may be a tough votes," he said. "Republicans will be offering amendments that are tough voting issues. That's healthy."

Rep. Steve King, who has proposed allowing Members from either party to request and receive an up-or-down vote on line-item cuts in the budget, praised the open process. “It’s hard to keep me satisfied,” the Iowa Republican said. “I’m always checking the fences because I think somebody else builds the fences and I don’t like them. I like open range.”

After King presented his proposed change to House rules, members of the working group asked questions and debated its merits, he said. “We are discussing how things actually function, and that idea had a very good hearing,” he said.

When votes occur has also been a frequently debated topic, said **Rep. John Campbell**, a member of the Floor, Committee and House Schedule Working Group.

“This deal we have this year, you don’t know if you are going to be in on Friday or not until 6:30 p.m. Thursday night, which means Friday becomes no good for anything,” the California Republican said. “

You can’t do anything here and you can’t do anything in your district because you don’t know where you are going to be. Clearly, we want to establish more certainty.”

Campbell said **“probably 30 or 40”** Members had been through his working group alone to discuss their ideas or ask questions.

“We are definitely considering a number of reasonably significant changes, and change is always difficult,” **Campbell** said. **“We’ve gotten a lot of input.”**

Rep. Adrian Smith said he visited the House Operations Working Group just to see what proposals were on the table. “I just wanted to see what other Members are saying,” the Nebraska Republican said.

Smith, who comes from a large rural district, said he got the impression that Members’ Representational Allowances — funds for official business, such as travel expenses, in Washington, D.C., or in their district — would be reduced, an idea that he said he supports.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz, a member of the House Operations Working Group, said the meetings

Thursday and Friday were only one way the transition team has been getting information. A survey distributed to Members and staff generated 300 responses in 48 hours, the Utah Republican said.

He said that while committee jurisdictional fights are probably the most pressing matter that needs to be acted upon by the Conference, his group has been busy meeting with nonpartisan entities such as the Architect of the Capitol and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Chaffetz said the notoriously inadequate plastic utensils in the Capitol complex cafeteria have also been a topic. "Forks are big," he said.